

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-04 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 RSC-01 AID-05 DOTE-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:ASCHIFFERDECKER:MRC

APPROVED BY NEA:LBLAINGEN

COMMERCE/MEPD:JSMITH (SUBS)

NEA/PAB:PDCONSTABLE

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R 112302Z OCT 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KABUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, AF

SUBJECT: SULTAN MAHMUD GHAZI VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: KABUL 5858

1. SULTAN MAHMUD GHAZI VISITED WASHINGTON OCTOBER 7-9 AND MET ONLY WITH AFGHAN EMBASSY AND IBRD OFFICIALS. WHILE HERE HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS WAS UNOFFICIAL VISIT. HE DECLINED OFFER OF HOSPITALITY BY STATE AND COMMERCE OFFICIALS, EXPLAINING TO JOHN SANDS OF MEPD THAT HE WAS "TOO TIRED FROM HIS TRAVELS." HE CONVEYED HIS THANKS FOR COURTESIES OFFERED IN AMIABLE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LAINGEN.

2. DISCUSSIONS WITH IBRD OFFICIALS (BENJENK, WAPENHANS, PAIJMANS, IJICHI), FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON TOURISM PROJECT. RE HOTEL DESIGN IN BAMIAN, GHAZI EXPLAINED, GENERALLY TO BANK'S SATISFACTION, THAT GOA HAD NOT RPT NOT GIVEN FINAL APPROVAL TO BREUER ASSOCIATES DESIGN. HE ALSO ASKED IBRD TO HOLD IN ABEYANCE PROJECT FOR NEW HOTEL IN KABUL. TWO REASONS WERE ADVANCED FOR RETHINKING TOURISM PROJECT;
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(1) COSTS HAD INCREASED GREATLY FROM ORIGINAL ESTIMATES;

(2) LOW OCCUPANCY RATE OF INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL IN KABUL CALLED INTO QUESTION DESIRABILITY OF BUILDING ANOTHER FIRST CLASS HOTEL THERE.

3. CONCLUSION OF MEETINGS WAS THAT ENTIRE TOURISM PROJECT SHOULD BE RE-STUDIED ON BOTH SIDES AND NEW COST ESTIMATES MADE. IBRD LOAN OFFICER IJICHI CHARACTERIZED THIS PROJECT AS "ALMOST DEAD." HE SAID BANK OFFICIALS WERE GENERALLY IMPRESSED WITH GHAZI AND PLEASED TO HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW PROJECT.

4. GHAZI ALSO MET WITH MEMBERS OF IBRD ECONOMIC MISSION, SCHEDULED FOR THREE-FOUR WEEK VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN BEGINNING O/A OCTOBER 17. LEADER OF TEAM WILL BE VINOD DUBEY (INDIAN NATIONAL). INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE225461
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ASCHIFFERDECKER:MRC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740291-0751
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741050/aaaabrft.tel
Line Count: 76
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: KABUL 5858
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <13 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SULTAN MAHMUD GHAZI VISIT TO WASHINGTON
TAGS: OTRA, AF
To: KABUL
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005